

# Character Class

## Facing a Character Sheet, Part 3

### Back to Basics

By Skip Williams



When you're new to the *D&D* game, the sheer variety of character sheets available, both in print and online, can bring on a headache. Even after you've chosen a character sheet, you face the task of filling it out. The task isn't terribly difficult, but it's hardly intuitive. That's because character sheets are laid out so you can find what you need quickly during play, not so you can create your character quickly. (After all, you'll spend far more time playing your character than you'll spend creating it.) This article takes the character sheet provided here on this site and unravels its mysteries by creating and recording an example character.

In the [first installment](#), we covered generating ability scores, choosing your class and race, assigning and adjusting ability scores, and recording racial traits. In [part 2](#), we covered skill selections, class features, feats, and equipment. In this final installment, we'll deal with recording all of your character's combat data and wrapping up loose details.

To create a character according to the directions provided here, download and print out all four pages of the [standard character sheet](#), or you can download the now completed sheet created for this article's [sample character](#) and follow along with the example.

#### Step 10: Record Combat Numbers

A character's class determines these values, so we must look to the druid class description for this information.

**Example:** A look at Table 3-8 and the accompanying text on pages 34-35 in the *Player's Handbook* shows the following values for a 1st-level druid:

- d8 hit dice

**Example:** Because this is Roywyn's first class level, she gains the maximum value -- 8 points -- for her first hit die. Her Constitution modifier is +0, so she has 8 hit points, which I record in the Hit Points box on the character sheet's first page.

- Base attack bonus +0

**Example:** Roywyn's +0 base attack bonus goes on the Base Attack Bonus line in the Attack Options box on the first page. Now that we know that, we can record attack and damage numbers for all of Roywyn's weapons.

Roywyn has a Strength modifier of +0 and a size modifier of +1, giving her an attack bonus of +1 with her scimitar. Table 7-5 in the *Player's Handbook* shows that the damage for Roywyn's small scimitar is 1d4 points of damage, +0 for her Strength modifier. The critical rating for any scimitar is 18-20/x2.

Roywyn also has a +1 attack modifier for melee attacks with her small club. She deals 1d4 points of damage with the club, and its critical rating is x2.

Roywyn also can throw her club. Her attack bonus when throwing is +3 (thanks to her Dexterity and size modifiers), and her range increment (from Table 7-5) is 10 feet. Damage and critical rating is the same as for melee attacks.

Roywyn has a +3 attack bonus with her sling. Her range increment is 50 feet. Her damage is 1d3, and her critical rating is x2.

We've already recorded Roywyn's -4 grapple modifier for her size in Step 4. To complete the grapple section on the character sheet, I add Roywyn's base attack bonus of +0 and her Strength bonus of +0. This gives Roywyn a total grapple modifier of -4.

We've also already noted Roywyn's racial attack bonus against kobolds and goblinoids in Step 4.

- Base Fortitude save +2, base Reflex save +0, base Will save +2

I record the base save bonuses in the Saving Throw section on the first page. I also add in Roywyn's ability modifiers. Roywyn has no magic or other effects that improve her saves, so her final save modifiers are Fortitude +2 (base +2 +0 for Constitution), Reflex +2 (base +0 +2 for Dexterity), and Will +4 (base +2 +2 for Wisdom). I've already noted Roywyn's racial bonus against illusion effects in Step 4.

- Armor Class and Speed

To calculate Roywyn's Armor Class and speed, we must turn to Table 7-6 in the *Player's Handbook*. Roywyn receives a +3 armor bonus for her hide armor. Hide armor allows a maximum Dexterity bonus of +4, so that's not a problem for Roywyn. Hide armor imposes a -3 armor check penalty. Hide armor also has an arcane spell failure chance of 20%, which we can ignore because Roywyn is not an arcane spellcaster. Hide armor reduces Roywyn's speed to 15 feet.

Roywyn receives a +2 shield bonus to Armor Class from her heavy shield. The shield gives Roywyn an additional -2 check penalty. A shield doesn't affect Roywyn's speed, and we're once again ignoring the arcane spell failure chance.

We recorded Roywyn's size modifier to Armor Class in Step 4.

All this gives Roywyn an Armor Class of 18 (10 +1 size, +3 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dexterity), which I record on the sheet's first page. Roywyn also has an extra dodge bonus to Armor Class when fighting giants, which we recorded in Step 4.

Roywyn's touch Armor Class is 13 (10 +1 size, +2 Dexterity).

Roywyn's flat-footed Armor Class is 16 (10 +1 size, +3 armor, +2 shield).

- Initiative modifier

Roywyn as a +2 Initiative modifier thanks to her Dexterity of 14.

### Step 11: Finishing Up

I need to go back to the skills section to apply the -5 armor penalty to her Jump and Hide skill scores. In the case of Jump, Roywyn already had a -6 penalty because her base speed is 20 (-6 per each 10 feet less than 30). Hide armor reduces her speed to 15, but that still counts as only 10 less than 30. Unfortunately, the -5 armor check penalty does combine with the speed penalty, giving her a total Jump penalty of -11. She won't be doing much jumping.

This finally completes Step 5.

Many portions of the character sheet were left blank because they don't apply to Roywyn.

That wraps up the process. You can follow these same steps to complete any other character sheet -- only the book titles and page numbers will be different.

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### About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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